



# Turtle Tracks

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association



Volume 20, Issue 3

## President's Message

### Hello to trail users:

Wow, what a difference a year in time makes, last fall we were inundated in rain, snow, what have you, this fall it cannot rain even a little bit. And what a summer for outdoor recreation, we have seen large increases in trail use compared to other years and it started way back in March. I suspect COVID-19 had something to do with this increase. The coronairus has put a kink in all our lives, but we will get over this and proceed with a more normal 2021. We had to cancel our Annual membership meeting this year, but we have been able to continue with trail promotions and improvements due to the generous donations of many people. First, we have new Life members, **Sandy Baertsch, Bahne, Kay, Charlie and Anna Bahnson, Governor Doug Burgum and his wife Kathryn, and Hiram Rogers and Jean Gaugler.** We now have 40 Life Members. We have a new Post member, **Art and Linda Glasoe, two new Trail Boss members, Kelly McGrew and Rachel Berg,** and eight new Founding members, **Kevin and Sidney Caraballo, John and Kerry Grant, Andrew and Bridget Rice, Leonard Stanley, Jessica Boone, Brittney Denesha, Todd Lamotte and Jennifer Morlock,** thank you all very much. These donations will be put to good use as part of our 2021 RTP surfacing projects.

Then a big thank you to all the members that have renewed, and for those wondering if you are current, please review the date on your address label that tells you when your renewal is due. If you receive an electronic copy the date will be in the message that *Turtle Tracks* is

attached to. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and all membership donations are tax deductible. **MDHTA members** are what keeps this organization going and doing great things on the MDH trail system.

Some updates, we have completed our 2020 **RTP grant** from the **ND Park and Recreation** of placing gravel surface on a couple miles of trail In the Sully Creek Park area. We want to thank **Doug Tescher, TRMF, and ND State Parks Dept** for allowing us to complete this project on their lands. Trail users can now use this area of the MDH trail in all weather conditions. Thanks to all who volunteered to make this project a success, some 61 people showed up and worked in the 100-degree heat last June 27.

**Jesse Hanson** is now directing our **MDHT Challenge**, so get your mileage accomplishments into him for your badges by December 31 for your 2020 badge. A MDHT Challenge 2020 Mileage Log can be downloaded from the News tab on the MDHTA.COM website.

We installed two more resting benches at Coal creek and Magpie trailheads and have two more ready to install, one at Bennett, donated by a **Roughrider Electric Roundup** grant. Thanks. And the last one at CCC trailhead. This will complete the five-year-old trailhead bench project with the Forest Service initiated by **Bruce Bishop.**

In our spring meeting with the **FS**, they gave the **MDHTA** permission to do work on FS lands, so we applied for two RTP grants in 2021. We were successful in obtaining these two **RTP grants** for 2021, one will finish surfacing the Sully Creek area, on private

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### Special point of interest:

- *Theodore Roosevelt named the Elkhorn Ranch after finding the remains of two bull elk with interlocked horns on his property.*

# A Maah Daah Hey Trail Pioneer, Morris Tarnavsky 1941-2020

By Vonne Tarnavsky

On January 12, 2020, Morris passed away after a short course of ALS. Morris was a son of a Ukrainian homesteader, Tomas Tarnavsky and Mary (Skachenko) Tarnavsky in McKenzie County. He grew up south of Watford City, ND and except for his college years, lived on the ranch his entire lifetime.

Life on the ranch revolved around the cattle operation, which this year, is 110 years old. From a young age, Morris was involved with livestock and moving cattle and rounding them up in the fall with his family. The range covered includes what is now the North Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park as it was still range at that time and the pasture systems (8-1 and 8-2) in the Little Missouri Grasslands.

As a member of the North Dakota Morgan Horse Association (NDMHA), Morris, started to host a club trail ride at the old CCC Camp. The camp was fenced in and used for gathering cattle and made a great base camp for these trail rides in the 1980's. He brought his father's old salt shack from Pasture 8-1 down to the camp for an outhouse and brought in stock panels for the rider's horses. An adjoining well of the Tarnavsky property fed a hydrant in the campground as well as a stock tank in the government pasture.

When I first came to know Morris, it was on an NDMHA trail ride that was based at this camp. The CCC Camp became a popular location for horsemen in those years and when I first came here to ride, on a trail ride in 1988, it was packed. There were so many rigs in that fenced in area, that Morris offered to let the overflow of people that were coming in, park on the Tarnavsky property across the fence. It was amazing, and though there were about 150 horses or so there, it was so much fun for everyone to get out on the trails. There was so much territory to explore.

Everyone enjoyed going out on the trail with Morris. I used to jokingly call him the "Guru of the Badlands". He knew every bit of the country like the back of his hand and he also knew the history of the country. He had great riding skills and would competently tackle so much rugged country that flatlanders would avoid. He would look at trails of wildlife and cattle, could identify what had gone through and the rough time they went through. He also knew where to cross the Little Missouri and creek mouths safely by observing where the deer or cattle went through. If you did not see tracks, you didn't go.

Morris told me and others, at that time, that he would really like to see if the Morgan Association could schedule a park to park ride - meaning a ride from the North Unit to the South

Unit of Theodore Roosevelt and we all agreed that it would be a great adventure.

Later that fall, Morris approached a ranger at the US Forest Service office in Watford City about the possibility of putting this trail ride together. A gentleman, that I unfortunately cannot recall his name, had a light aircraft and they flew over the country and considered the possibility and possible route for this trail. And there, the concept of developing the trail was born. I think it had been possibly considered before, but this was the catalyst.

Morris and I married in 1989 and it was soon afterward, I'm thinking 1990, many agencies and interested parties gathered at the Pleasant Valley Ranch at the South Unit and rode an overnight ride to begin exploration and feasibility over 20 miles of the proposed trail. Agencies included the US Forest Service, North Dakota Game and Fish, ND Park and Recreation, ND State Historical Society, National Park Service, and us, just to name a few. Our own

Curt Glasoe was there, and he has really facilitated so much for this trail and continues to do so. In the process, dear friend, Gerard Baker, who has shared so much of his Mandan Hidatsa Arikara history and culture, gave it the appropriate name, Maah Daah Hey – the grandfather or long-lasting trail.

Morris was happy to see that the "Multiple Use" concept of making the MDH trail safe, accessible, and ecologically sound with minimum impact on the environment. Many hours of consideration of how to make this trail system work for everyone was a huge effort by many people since that time.

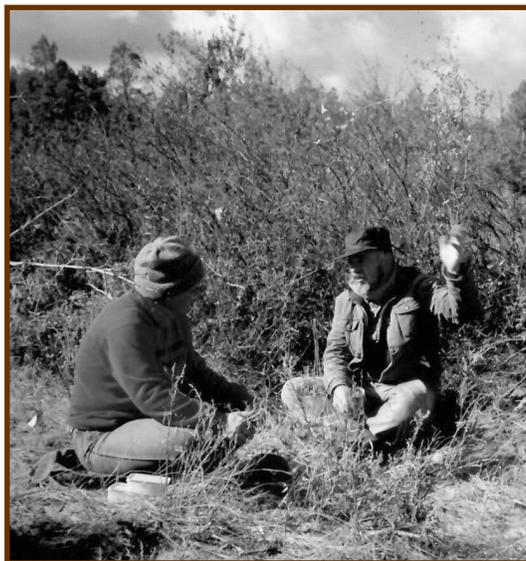
Every time, Morris and I would see great works, by the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association and Save the Maah

Daah Hey, we'd smile because this is a very great endeavor of so many people, agencies, and volunteers who keep this alive.

And finally, Morris came to know and became friends with Nick Ybarra who has really picked up the baton and run with making and keeping this trail in great shape. I am glad that he and Morris got to know each other

Through gifts of friends and family, you will see Morris represented on the Kiosk at Sully Creek Campground. I am thankful to them and I am proud of that tribute. You will also see the men mentioned here on that Kiosk. It's great to know the story behind the names.

Morris would say, "Get out on the Maah Daah Hey and enjoy the trip."



# Membership Recognition—Thank You!

## Life Members:

Roger & Pat Ashley  
\*Sandy Baertsch  
Gerard & Mary Kay Baker  
Glenn & Jolene Baranko  
Bruce & Roberta Bishop  
\*Bahne, Kay, Charlie & Anna Bahnson  
Chad & Emily Mitzel Brackelsberg  
Bev Brierley  
\*Doug & Kathryn Burgum  
Adam & Barbra Curtis  
Tom & Sherri Dickson  
Kenneth & Norma Eberts  
Curt & Carol Glasoe  
Greg and Michele Gunderson  
Heidi Heitkamp & Darwin Lange  
Ron & Sheila Hartl  
William Hoeg  
Jesse Hanson & Lisa Kudelka  
Dale & Jennifer Heglund  
Dr. Tim & Amy Juelson  
Christa Kron  
Mike & Chandra Langseth  
Mark Liebig  
Ron Luethe  
Don & Susan Mayer  
Medora Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Rodney & Carolyn Mitzel  
John R. Olson  
Mike Parke  
Charles & Sandra Peterson  
\*Hiram Rogers & Jean Gaugler  
Brian Selland  
Diane Stoltz Family  
Vonne Tarnavsky

Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation

Dwight & Loa Tober  
Glenny Ulschak  
Steve & Janet Wieser  
Nick & Lindsey Ybarra  
Mark Zimmerman

## Post Marker:

Jeanne & Ron Avey  
\*Art & Linda Glasoe

## Trail Boss:

\*Rachel Berg  
\*Kelly McGrew

## Founding:

\*Jessica Booke  
\*Kevin & Sydney Caraballo  
Paul Conrad  
\*Brittney Denesha  
Andrew Howick  
\*John & Kerry Grant  
\*Todd Lamotte  
\*Jennifer Morlock  
\*Andrew & Bridget Rice  
Eric Selle  
\*Leonard Stanley  
Freida Tebelius  
Leland Tong  
The Printers

## In Memoriam

Denton & Paulette Berntson  
Kyle Brierley  
Aileen Luethe  
Morris Tarnavsky

\* Denotes new member at this level since last  
*Turtle Tracks*

# Forest Service Update

**By Rob Schilling, Recreation Manager, Little Missouri National Grassland**

Wow, what a dynamic year! As I reflect on this past field season, I am amazed at all we accomplished together despite the constant, unexpected changes presented around every corner. I appreciate the resilience and flexibility of all the volunteers, partners, and Agency staff who came together to make this season a success. Together we completed multiple projects on the Maah Daah Hey trail system and provided North Dakota with an amazing outdoor recreation experience.



We began the 2020 field season with the restoration of the Cottonwood Trail. This project repaired switchbacks, installed erosion-control rolling dips, and restored the damaged trail tread. After completing the Cottonwood Trail restoration, we focused our attention on the Andrews Creek low water crossing on the Buffalo Gap Trail; where contractors installed Articulated Concrete Block Matt to provide a stable, hardened crossing for trail

users. Finally, the Forest Service trail crew reestablished the Summit Viewpoint Trail. This trail provides users an exciting 1.9 mile out-and-back hike through the majestic badlands. We look forward to reconnecting the Summit

Viewpoint Trail to the Maah Daah Hey in the future.

To compliment these trail projects, the Forest Service received approval to increase the camping fees from \$6.00, to \$10.00 per night for all campgrounds along the Maah Daah Hey Trail. The added revenue has created opportunities for additional campground, trail, and trailhead improvements. Using revenue generated from the campgrounds, we hired a Landscape Architect to redesign the CCC Campground and Trailhead. The redesigned campground includes defined camping loops for tents, equestrian campers, and RV's, potable water spigots, electric hook-ups, group campsites, corrals, a bike maintenance/wash station, enhanced trailhead parking and road surfacing for improved access. We hope to begin reconstruction sometime in mid to late 2021.

In addition to the CCC Campground redesign, we will be installing a new trailhead at the Buffalo Gap Campground, completing a large trail reroute near Pioneer Gulch, and collaborating with the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association to complete restoration and surfacing between Bully Pulpit and Sully Creek State Park, and adjacent to the Coal Creek Campground.

In closing, I want to say thank you to everyone who helped make this season a success. Your dedication to the Maah Daah Hey Trail System and partnership with the Little Missouri National Grasslands has made these achievements possible.

Happy Holidays!

## Meet Your New Board Member

With Bev Brierley resigning from the board, a new board member was found to complete Bev's remaining term. Please help welcome Amy Vojacek. Amy grew up on a ranch north of Sentinel Butte ND so she is very familiar with the area. She attended North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton. During the last 17 years she have been working as a dental hygienist, currently in Sidney Montana. She and her husband Ryan along with their children Nick (11) Rachel (8) live in Glendive. The Vojacek's enjoy camping, hiking, biking and exploring new places outdoors. Amy is looking forward to becoming more involved with the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association.



# Maah Daah Hey Trail Challenge News

By Jesse Hanson

I have recently assumed the responsibility of receiving the mileage logs for the MDHT Challenge from long time board of directors member Bruce Bishop. Bruce asked to transfer this duty to another board member as he and his wife have moved out of state. Thanks for your years of service on the board Bruce!!

While just starting to receive challenge logs from trail users in the past few weeks reading notes from the trail users are informative and enjoyable. Log notes include the spectrum of feelings and experiences while on the MDH Trail.

*Magical Scenery, Awesome, technical trail segment, such a fun route for mountain biking, Coal Creek - gorgeous!, Had to wait about 3 hours for buffalo to move off of the trail - rut season.*

Other single word or short phrases thoughtfully explain a full day's trail experience from enjoyment of the magical ND badlands to the physical effort it takes to tackle the MDH trail; *Grateful, Perseverance, Rattlesnake, Wow, the views!!,*

*Pondering decisions, Beautiful descent to Elkhorn and blistery surrender, soul cleansing."*

One paragraph from a new ND resident sums up what the MDH trail has meant to him; .... *getting on this trail to hike and mountain bike so much really helped me feel at home in this state.*

The MDHT Challenge log is a good way for people to document their travels on a variety of trail segments over the course of a year - and submitting the trail log at the end of a calendar year will grant you a much-coveted challenge patch for the completed mileages. Don't forget to send your favorite photos you have taken during your time spent on the Maah Daah Hey. We may include them in future issues of *Turtle Tracks* or put them on [MDHTA.com](http://MDHTA.com).

Thank you to those who have participated and we look forward to hearing from others who take on the trail challenge.

*President's Message (Continued from page 1)*

and FS lands, and two, surface some 2-3 miles in the Coal Creek camp area, all on FS lands. So, watch for the days next summer that we will need volunteers to furnish our share of work on these RTP grants. More to come on this. In addition to that meeting I met with the FS Medora and McKenzie Ranger Districts to both identify problem areas along the trail as well as coordinate activities of MDHTA with the FS. Opportunities exist to improve trail infrastructure, trail heads, experiences in the Badlands and other trail related activities to improve recreation.

If you are looking for some cool **Christmas gifts**, we have a great supply of MDH merchandize, including medallions, water bottles, patches, caps, T-shirts, and of course MDH maps for all the trail enthusiasts in your group. Just go to [MDHTA.com](http://MDHTA.com). and place your order.

At our last board meeting, we welcomed **Amy Vojacek** to her first Board meeting. **Jesse Hanson and Amy Tysver** are handling our finances and doing a bang-up job for us. Roger Ashley will step down as a Board member after our spring Annual Meeting. It is scheduled in Dickinson April 24, 2021 if all works out. **Roger and Pat Ashley** have been active members of MDHTA over many years, so if **you** or you know of someone that is willing to serve on the MDHTA Board, please relay your interest to me or any of the Board members.

Another big **THANK YOU** to **Roger and Pat Ashley** for editing and preparing this *Turtle Tracks* Newsletter.

Have a great winter season and hope to see you in the spring on the MDH trail.

Happy Trails.

Curtis W. Glasoe – President - MDHTA

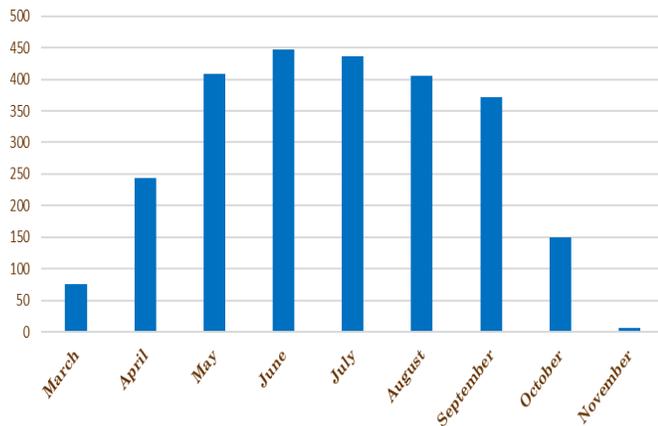


# Trail Statistics 2020

By Roger Ashley

Trail usage apparently was up this year compared to the 2018 trail user numbers collected at trail registers located at trailheads along the MDHT. At the time of this write-up the author did not have access to the 2019 trail user numbers. Trail registers recorded 2,563 sign-ins during 2020. As can be seen June is the month the trail receives the greatest visitation followed by July, May, and August. In comparison to 2018, user numbers in 2020 increased by 86% for the same months in the comparison.

Trail Usage by Month, 2020



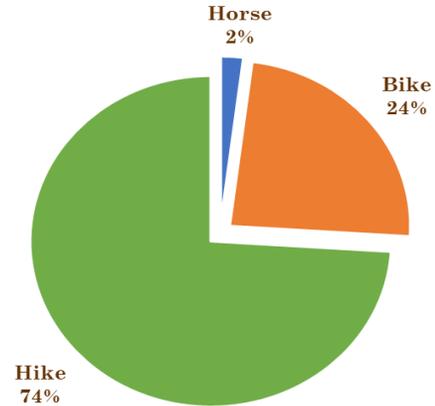
Trail registers also indicated that trail users came from all regions of the USA. Canadians also found their way onto the MDHT as well as an individual from Brazil. Though the trail is used primarily by people in the immediate four state area the Maah Daah Hey is being recognized as a destination to visit by trail enthusiasts.



Trail registers also disclose the mode of travel, that is how did the user travel down the trail. In one instance a pair of trail users noted that they were using alpacas, something we don't normally see on the trail. Alpacas are used as pack animals rather than for riding. Trail registers showed a tendency towards more hikers in 2020 than in 2018 when 60% were hikers. Equestrian use was 6% and bikers were

34% in 2018. 2020 percentages are shown below. See the 2019 Fall Issue of Turtle Tracks for more on the 2018 survey.

Mode of Travel, 2020



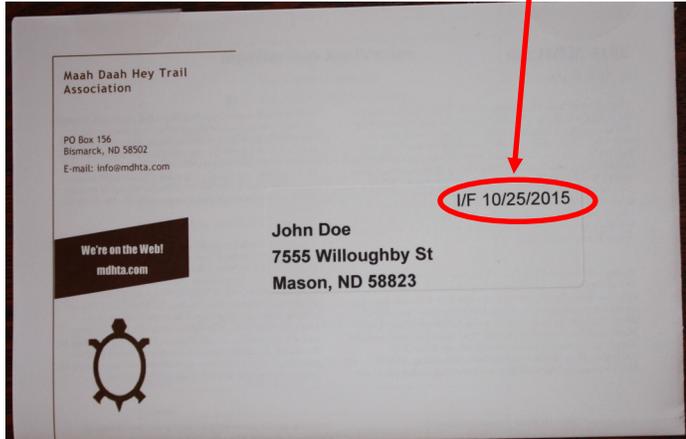
As might be expected not everyone signs the register at the trailhead. MDHTA in cooperation with the US Forest Service placed five trail counters along the trail with varying degrees of success. The counters required two trees or posts on opposite sides of the trail. Trees in the badlands are a rare commodity which wildlife and livestock seek out for shelter from the sun and weather. Unfortunately, the counter can't tell if the passer-by was a trail user or four-legged resident. The counter that had counts most likely to represent a true count of trail users was located near Sully Creek State Park on TRMF property. Access by wildlife and cattle to this site is considered very limited. The count for this location from mid-June until it was retrieved on November 3 was 6,091 or about 22 times greater than the number of trail users who self-registered at the Sully Creek Trailhead. With the experience gained this past season and a new counter system that is subject to recording fewer residents we should have a better idea of trail use across the entire trail.

In addition to trail registration and counts the US Forest Service tracks group uses of the trail, including bike and foot races. The US Forest Service saw an increase of 10% in campsite occupancy. We understand that State Parks have seen an increase in occupancy of about 35% compared to last year.

Even with the COVID pandemic, people found a way to recreate and relieve some of the cabin fever in a healthy way. With 144 miles of the Maah Daah Hey Trail people were able to maintain a safe distance.

# Membership Renewal – It May be Time!

“When do I renew my membership?” All memberships are one year in length except the three year Individual/Family Memberships and Life Memberships. To determine when your membership is up for renewal check the upper right corner of the mailing label on your newsletter.



Your current membership level (I/F = Individual or Family; F = Founding; T = Trail Boss; M = Mile Marker; and Life) as well as your membership expiration date is given. If your membership has expired please complete the membership application form found in this newsletter or go to [mdhta.com/membership](http://mdhta.com/membership) to complete the requested information. Include a check made out to MDHTA or if you wish to use a credit card go to [mdhta.com/membership](http://mdhta.com/membership).

## Moving? Changing your Email address?

Don't forget to contact us with your new postal address or email address. Stay connected.

## Thanks to all those that have renewed to date!

### Membership Application

Yes! I want to join the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Individual/Family Member - turtle pin   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Post Marker Member - wood sign on post or for home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$70 Individual/Family Member for 3 years - turtle pin   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Life Member - turtle sign & name on kiosk         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Founding Member <input type="checkbox"/> Cap or <input type="checkbox"/> T-shirt S M L XL |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Trail Boss Member - Denim shirt S M L XL   |   |

*Make checks payable to: MDHTA, P. O., Box 156, Bismarck, ND 58502*

PLEASE PRINT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Email newsletter: Yes  No

**Maah Daah Hey Trail  
Association**

PO Box 156  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
E-mail: [hello@mdhta.com](mailto:hello@mdhta.com)

**We're on the Web!**  
**[mdhta.com](http://mdhta.com)**



**MAAH DAAH HEY TRAIL ASSOCIATION  
Officers and Board of Directors**

President—Curt Glasoe  
Vice President—Roger Ashley  
Secretary—Brent McCluskey  
Treasurer—Jesse Hanson  
Nathaniel Bishop  
Amy Vojacek

Dates to Remember

December 31,	Trail Challenge Logs Due
2020	
March 15, 2021	<i>Trails of North Dakota Badlands &amp; Prairies</i> release date
April 24, 2021	MDHTA annual meeting

The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing and maintaining a linear, non-motorized, sustainable, recreational trail system in southwest North Dakota, through voluntary and public involvement, and in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.

Find us on 